THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) According to provisional trade data, the imports during the first nine months of the current financial year (i.e. April-December, 1987) stood at Rs. 16111 crores.

(b) and (d) Import of various items is governed by the provisions of the Import-Export Policy and as such the question of making allocations for each and every item imported into the country does not arise. The import of major bulk commodities of mass consumption is decided on the basis of the Government's assessment of the gap between demand and indigenous availability of these items from time to time and other relevant factors and the necessary foreign exchange releases are made to the State Canalising Agencies to arrange these imports.

(c) No, Sir.

Pension to widows of freedom fighters

*293. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the widows of freedom fighters are also eligible for pensions;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have not yet cleared the proposal to extend First Class Railway Pass facilities to the widows of freedom fighters; if so, what are the reasons for the delay;

(c) by when this proposal is likely to be cleared;

(d) whether Government are considering to give other benefits to the freedom fighters and their widows; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government would consider issuing Railway Passes for freedom fighters for Bharat Darshan once in life time?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir, widows whose late husbands fulfil the requirements of the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme are eligible for pension.

(b) and (c) The Scheme as conceived at the instance of the late Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi is aimed at providing a one-time opportunity to freedom fighters during their life time to visit places of their choice along with respective spouse|one companion for a period of one year from the date of issue. There is, therefore, no provision in the Scheme for giving free railway passes to widows of freedom fighters.

(d) Freedom Fighters in receipt of Central pension are given benefits like Monthly Pension, Railway Card Pass for unlimited free travel by A.C. 2 tier|first Class by train for a period of one year from the date of issue for the freedom fighter and his spouse|one companion and free medical facilities in Central Government hospitals at par with Group 'A' officers of the Central Government. In addition the respective State Governments are giving various facilities. Recently a Scheme for free voyage to Andaman & Nicobar Islands for freedom fighters in receipt of Central pension and his spouse| one companion has also been introduced.

(e) As mentioned above in (d), Government are already issuing free railway passes for unlimited travel for a period of one year from the date of issue to freedom fighters receiving Central Pension. The Scheme which was initially operative from 19.11.1986 to 18.11.1987 has been extended upto 18.11.1988. The validity of passes, however, remain one year from the date of issue. This extended facility applies only to those freedom fighters who had not availed of this facility earlier.

World Bank loan for Development of Sericulture

*294. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY:
SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state: